Natural Disasters and Occupational Disruption

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ABSTRACT

Natural disasters affect people worldwide and can cause occupational disruption that may have immediate and prolonged impact on humans. Increasing in frequency throughout the world, natural disasters can consist of hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, floods, and fires to name a few. This poster presents insight into the first-hand experiences and scholarly articles on the effects of occupational disruption or temporary disturbance to an individual’s engagement in day-to-day living.

Figure 1. Surveying destruction for precious items
METHODOLOGY

- Databases utilized: PubMed, CINAHL
- Keywords searched: Occupational therapy, man-made, disaster, occupational disruption, students, natural disasters, hurricanes
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria: Articles pertaining to natural disasters, the effects of natural disasters on occupations, and occupational disruption were the main criteria for selection.

OBJECTIVES

- Describe occupational disruption related to natural disasters
- Differentiate the immediate and lasting impacts of natural disasters
- Identify potential impact of natural disasters on the occupation of graduate students in an affected location
THEMES OF DISASTER LITERATURE

• Habits, roles, and routines of students and educators are impacted following natural disasters when facing the physical barriers and emotional stressors that accompany such events.

• Man-made disasters and natural disasters produce substantial long-term mental health effects that limit quality of life by provoking task pressures, temporal disturbance, loss of orientation, and occupational disruption.

• Natural disasters can impact a person’s physical and emotional being which can disrupt their identity and their vocational and personal occupations.

Figure 3. Coast Guard delivering water to residents

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Natural disasters have the potential to cause occupational disruption leading to changes to normal patterns, restrictions in participation, and even a change in identity. The ways disasters impact the occupations of those affected may heed the ability of occupational therapists to be part of the response teams in assisting those in coping with these transitions.
WHAT LIES AHEAD

The literature suggests that occupational disruption occurs among different populations. The focus of our next step in our occupational science journey is to probe into the experience of a focused group of individuals: graduate students in Puerto Rico which was devastated by Hurricane Maria. The title of our study is:

**Occupational Disruption following Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico: A Mixed Methods Study of University Students**

See next page for References and Acknowledgements
REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


Lock, J. (2010). U.S. army soldiers from bravo company, 2nd battalion, 325th airborne infantry regiment, 2nd brigade combat team, 82nd airborne division, Fort Bragg, NC, convoy

Figure 5. Residents view remnants of their home after California wildfires
back to the Troussaint Louverture international airport, Haiti after delivering earthquake relief (food and water) to the local Haitians on January 22, 2010 in Port au prince, Haiti for operation unified response [Online Image]. Retrieved October 18, 2018 from http://www.jbcharleston.jb.mil


